



TOM O'HALLERAN
1ST DISTRICT, ARIZONA

September 15, 2020

The Honorable Collin Peterson
Chairman
House Agriculture Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Raul Grijalva
Chairman
House Natural Resources Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Peterson and Chairman Grijalva,

As you are aware, wildfire has become a devastating threat to citizens in communities across the nation. Climate change is clearly contributing to the increase in conditions that allow fires to grow to hundreds of thousands of acres. Similarly, federal policy that promoted full suppression has caused forests to become even more prone to fire. I kindly request that you work together to host a joint hearing between the House Agriculture Committee and the House Natural Resources Committee exploring the federal role in reducing fire risk.

The joint hearing would answer several important questions:

- 1) Congress implemented the fire funding fix during the 115th Congress to more readily fund fire suppression efforts without the need to use non-fire funding. How well has this worked and has the resulting budgetary stability resulted in increased work related to fire prevention and risk reduction?
- 2) How has budgetary stability changed staffing resources, particularly regarding fire prevention and forest management?
- 3) In the 2018 Farm Bill, stewardship contract length was increased to 20 years. This modification has the capacity to ensure that forest restoration is done sustainably, over the long term, to reduce risk, and provide jobs. How are these contracts being used to improve forest health and reduce risk to devastating forest fires?
- 4) How have stewardship contracts and projects such as 4FRI improved forest resiliency?

A hearing is necessary to educate members and the public on the costs of fire, the suffering and damage to human life fire causes, the acreages burned, and what we can do to reduce risk, particularly in the wildland urban interface, where we are currently seeing death and destruction. Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to continuing to work together on this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tom O'Halleran". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tom" and last name "O'Halleran" clearly distinguishable.

Tom O'Halleran
Member of Congress